

Date

2-9-07

Alternatives exist to meet the needs of these children—options that work better and cost less. As the Surgeon General's Report on Mental Health reported in 1999, "the most convincing evidence of effectiveness is for home-based services and therapeutic foster care." A comprehensive system of care would dramatically reduce the number of children in these residential facilities because children could be served in their own communities, at a significantly reduced cost.

Today, we call on the General Accounting Office to conduct a study into the issue of children housed in unregulated residential treatment programs, so that the full extent of the problems in these facilities can be understood. We also urge Congress to enact legislation to increase protections for children in these residential treatment facilities in the United States and abroad and to improve access to essential community and school-based mental health services.

Specifically, we urge lawmakers to enact the following bipartisan, commonsense proposals that would effectuate the

President Bush's New Freedom Commission's call to "swiftly eliminate unnecessary and inappropriate institutionalization and that would increase protections in residential treatment programs:

- The End Institutionalized Abuse Against Children Act (H.R. 1738)
- The Keeping Families Together Act (H.R. 823 / S. 380)

Too little information is known about the extent of the problems and abuses, and yet what is known is the cause of great concern. As children's mental health professionals and leaders, we believe that at best, these programs do not meet the needs of most children with serious emotional or mental health disorders and, at worse, they subject children to abuse. We believe that parents unknowingly put their children in harms' way when they send their children to these programs, expecting good treatment and education. The undersigned organizations and individuals look forward to working with Members of Congress to enact these reforms.

## ON BEHALF OF:

## A START

American Psychological Association

American Association of  
Community PsychiatristsAmerican Orthopsychiatric  
Association

Child Welfare League of America

Federation of Families for Children's  
Mental HealthNational Youth Advocate  
Program, Inc.Tsila Abush-Kirsh, Ph.D.  
Licensed Clinical Psychologist  
Private Practice  
Tampa Palms, FLNeal Adams, M.D.  
Los Angeles, CaliforniaNeal Adams, M.D., M.P.H.  
Director of Special Projects  
California Institute for Mental  
Health  
Sacramento, CAC. Kimo Alameda, Ph.D.  
Director, Office of Multicultural  
Service  
Hawaii Department of Health  
Honolulu, HIMudita A. Bahadur, Ph.D.  
Licensed Psychologist  
Early Intervention Specialist  
Saint John's Health Center  
Santa Monica, CASusan Bailey, M.D.  
John Hopkins University School of  
Medicine  
Baltimore, MDLarry S. Baker, M.Div.  
Manager—Community Education  
Comprehensive Mental Health  
Center  
Tacoma, WA

Anne C. Bauer, M.D.

Beth Baumeister, Ph.D.  
Post-doctoral Fellow  
Pediatric Psychology  
Children's Hospital Los Angeles  
Los Angeles, CARobert F. Baxter, M.D.  
Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist  
Bonita Springs, FLStacy Becker, Psy.D.  
Licensed Psychologist & Clinical  
Supervisor  
Valley Coordinated Children's  
Services  
Los Angeles County Department of  
Mental Health  
Reseda, CALenore Behar, Ph.D.  
Director  
Child & Family Program Strategies  
Durham, NCMarilyn Benoit, M.D.  
Immediate Past President  
American Academy of Child &  
Adolescent Psychiatry  
Washington, DC

Catherine Bergstrom, Psy.D.

Lisa Bertaccini, L.C.S.W.  
Chief, Sacramento County Child  
and Family Mental Health  
Sacramento, CAJim Braun  
President & CEO  
Youth in Need  
St. Charles, MOEric J. Bruns, Ph.D.  
Assistant Professor  
Department of Psychiatry and  
Biobehavioral Sciences  
Division of Public Behavioral Health  
& Justice Policy  
University of Washington School of  
Medicine  
Seattle, WANicki Bush, M.S.  
Doctoral Student  
Child Clinical Psychology  
University of Washington  
Seattle, WAWilliam Buzogany, M.D.  
Medical Director  
Lad Lake, Inc.  
Dousman, WIKellye M. Campbell, M.N.,  
A.R.N.P.  
Department of Rehabilitative  
Medicine  
Harborview Medical Center  
Seattle, WAGlorisa Canino, Ph.D.  
Director  
Behavioral Sciences Research  
Institute  
University of Puerto Rico  
San Juan, Puerto Rico